

10/18/76

Olga Talamante
October 18, 1976

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COMPLAINT

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Chairman
Inter-American Commission on
Human Rights
Organization of American States
Washington, D. C. 20006
United States of America

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
() Release (X) Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): 66
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

Name: Olga Talamante

Nationality: United States of America

Address:
United States of America

wishes to communicate to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, for the purposes established in its Statute and Regulations, the following:

Name of the Person Whose Human Rights Have Been Violated:

Olga Talamante, Susana Pioli, Mirta Varela, Edith Stahelli de Frias (hereinafter referred to as the female prisoners).

Address:

Olga Talamante, see above; Susana Pioli, Mirta Varela, Edith Stahelli de Frias, Azul Prison, Unit 7, Azul, Argentina.

Description of the Violation:

From approximately November 14, 1974 until March 27, 1976, Olga Talamante was incarcerated in the Azul prison, Unit 7, under the following conditions. The other three female prisoners began their incarceration on the same date and have remained there under the following conditions to this date:

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Box 4855

1. The female prisoners were kept in the same jail cell with thirteen other women (a total of seventeen in one cell).

2. When the temperature went below freezing, as it often does during the winter months, the female prisoners were not provided with either adequate heating or adequate clothing. The women's continued and reasonable requests to the prison officials for more clothing and heating were ignored. As a result, all of them suffered severe frostbite.

3. Because of a leaky sewer pipe in the ceiling of the cell, urine and feces dripped regularly into the women's cell. This constituted a clear and serious health problem, but the prison officials refused to remedy the situation.

4. Beginning in December 1975, the prison officials restricted severely the visiting privileges and recreation time of the female prisoners.

5. Edith Stahelli de Frias gave birth to a baby daughter in May 1975. The prison officials waited until she was in labor pains to take her to the local hospital. Within three hours of birth, Edith and her child were returned to the prison. Edith received no post-natal care and, in fact, she was still unconscious from anesthesia upon her return to the Azul prison. For six months following the birth, Edith experienced frequent bleeding and became progressively weaker. After fainting several times, the prison officials finally took her to the hospital where the doctors discovered that she still carried part of the placenta

in her uterus. Soon after returning from the hospital, Edith and her baby were forced to reside in the cell with the sixteen other women. Finally, the baby was seldom given special medical treatment; never was the baby given special food.

Why the Female Prisoners Could Not Seek Judicial Recourse:

The women complained on numerous occasions to the prison officials about general and specific conditions, but no remedial action was taken. The inaction and insensitivity of the judiciary in other actions involving the women, especially regarding the complaints of torture, showed that further efforts at legal action would be fruitless and might even delay further their release.

Supporting Material:

1. Sworn affidavit of Olga Talamante (attached). Attention is drawn in particular to §§18-23, 25, 32, 38.

The above actions violate Article I of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. "Every human being has the right to life, liberty and the security of his person." These actions also violate Article XXV of the same document: "[Every individual] also has the right to humane treatment during the time he is in custody." Therefore, I respectfully request that the Commission investigate these violations.


OLGA TALAMANTE

October 18, 1976